



## Investigation of Concerns of Athlete Students in Athlete Training Centers for the Future

BİLAL ÇAĞLAYAN\*

ŞÜKRÜ YILMAZ\*\*

### Abstract

In Athlete Training Centers, the General Directorate of Sports is responsible for not only sports education of the students at different ages between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades but also for their formal education. It is important to identify and monitor potential concerns of all these athlete students, who are at a stage of shaping their future life and planning their professional career, for the future regardless of whether they are successful in sports or not, and to guide them in their career planning. The aim of the present study is to determine concerns of athlete students in athlete training centers (ATCs) for the future and reveal their thoughts about career planning. The universe of the study was 668 high school athlete students in ATCs. “Personal Information Form” and “Career Planning Questionnaire” developed by the authors, and “Beck Hopelessness Scale”, which was developed by Beck et al. and validity and reliability of which in our country was demonstrated by Seber et al. (1993) were used for collecting the study data. SPSS 22.0 software was used for calculations of the data and Chi-square test was employed to find the frequency and percentage distributions as well as the relationships between the questions. The study demonstrates that hope levels of athlete students for the future are high, guidance and counseling services provided at ATCs are guiding them in planning their future, but most of these athlete students are uncertain about what to do after they leave ATCs.

**Keywords:** *Sports, athlete training centers, concern for the future, career planning*

## Sporcu Eğitim Merkezlerinde Bulunan Sporcu Öğrencilerin Gelecek Kaygılarının İncelenmesi

### Öz

Sporcu Eğitim Merkezlerinde 5. sınıftan 12. sınıfa kadar değişik yaşlarda bulunan öğrencilerin sportif eğitimlerinden olduğu kadar örgün eğitimlerindeki durumlarında da Spor Genel Müdürlüğü'nün sorumluluğu bulunmaktadır. Sportif yönden başarılı olan ya da olamayan, gelecek hayatlarının temelini atıldığı ve mesleki kariyer planlamasının keşfetme döneminde bulunan tüm bu sporcu öğrencilerin yaşayabileceği olası gelecek kaygısının tespit ve takip edilmesi ve bununla birlikte kariyerlerini planlamalarında onlara rehberlik edilmesi önem arz etmektedir. Bu çalışma SEM'lerde bulunan sporcu öğrencilerin gelecek kaygılarını tespit etmek ve kariyer planlamaları hakkında düşüncelerini ortaya çıkarmak amacıyla yapılmıştır. Araştırmanın evreni SEM'lerde bulunan ve lisede okuyan 668 sporcu öğrencidir. Araştırma verilerinin toplanmasında araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan "Kişisel Bilgi Formu", "Kariyer Planlaması Anketi" ile Beck ve arkadaşları tarafından geliştirilen ve ülkemizde geçerlilik ve güvenilirlik çalışması Seber ve arkadaşları (1993) tarafından yapılan "Beck Umutsuzluk Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. Verilerin hesaplanmasında ise SPSS 22.0 paket programı kullanılmış olup çözümlenmesinde frekans ve yüzde dağılımları, ayrıca sorular arasındaki ilişkilerin bulunması için Chi-square (ki-kare) testi uygulanmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda; sporcu öğrencilerin geleceğe ilişkin umut düzeylerinin yüksek olduğu, SEM'lerde verilen rehberlik ve danışmanlık hizmetlerinin geleceklerini planlamada yol gösterici olduğu, ancak SEM'den ayrıldıklarında sonra çoğunluğunun ne yapacağı konusunda kararsız olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Spor, sporcu eğitim merkezi, gelecek kaygısı, kariyer planlaması.*

\*Kırıkkale University, Sports Science Faculty, Kırıkkale-TURKEY, caglayanbilal@gmail.com

\*\*Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ankara-TURKEY

## INTRODUCTION

Human is a social entity. The impact of the social environment on the individual is very important. Family takes the first place in this environment (Zorba, 2009). Family consists of the people, with whom the individual interacts for the rest of his life. Family is the place where most of the basic personality traits of the individual are shaped and the sense of basic trust that will continue throughout of his life by changing form is acquired. However, demands, expectations, life style, attitude of the family as well as the number of siblings are accepted as one of the important factors in the formation of anxiety in the student. (Saraç, 2015:2).

The individual, interacts only with his family and experiences the greatest support from his family in his early years, and spends most of his time with them until the age of adolescence when he starts to intensify his relations with his environment and his friends (Dilbaz and Seber, 1993; Karaküçük and Karakullukcu, 2017; Mumcu, 2011). As the individual approaches to the age of adolescence, there is a decrease in the time he spends with the family, and now the individual is willing to spend his time with his peers. In adolescence, the individual's dependence on his parents decreases, he experiences physical and psychological developments and changes, interacts with society and may start to concentrate on a professional career. Our country has a younger population compared to other European countries. According to the population projections based on the Address-Based Population Registration System 2012 results, it is estimated that the share of the study sample's age group (13-18 years) in total population will be 13.4% by 2023 (www.tuik.gov.tr, 22.11.2017).

When age groups of athlete students in athlete training centers are examined, it is seen that they are in either pre-adolescence or adolescence period and they are experiencing a discovery period, which is also the beginning of their career planning. Day athlete students can spend their times that remain from school and training hours with

their families. However, it is a fact that most of boarding athlete students are away from their families and usual environments at the age of adolescence, when they can be in various and complex emotions.

At this point, the athlete training center becomes the home of the athlete student and his trainer, his friends and other employees of the center become his family. In this context, in the light of the provisions of the Turkish Constitution's article 58 that states "The state shall take measures to ensure the training and development of the youth into whose keeping our state, independence, and our Republic are entrusted, in the light of contemporary science, in line with the principles and reforms of Atatürk, and in opposition to ideas aiming at the destruction of the indivisible integrity of the state with its territory and nation (Bayram, 2008; Ağır, 2007; Kolayis et al., 2015). The state shall take necessary measures to protect the youth from addiction to alcohol, drug addiction, crime, gambling, and similar vices, and ignorance." and article 59 that states "The state shall take measures to develop the physical and mental health of Turkish citizens of all ages, and encourage the spread of sports among the masses. The state shall protect successful athletes.", the duties and responsibilities of athlete training centers for student athletes are clearly seen.

The aim of this study is to determine whether athlete students in athlete training centers located within the provincial organizations of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, General Directorate of Sports (36 athlete training centers affiliated with 33 provincial directorates) experience feelings of concern, hopelessness, anxiety about their future, and to learn the ideas about their career planning of these athlete students who are in the discovery period, which is the first one of the career planning phases, and to establish the correlations between these findings and the athlete training centers, where they are trained. In this way, their awareness about what they can plan and do related to their future careers can be increased during the time they stay in athlete training centers before they continue to university education,

and recommendations can be given to them to help them to be more successful in both school education and sports training.

In this study, “Personal Information Form” that reveals the demographic information of athlete students and “Career Planning Questionnaire” that indicates the contribution of ATCs’ to this planning developed by the authors, and “Beck Hopelessness Scale”, which was developed by Beck et al. and validity and reliability of which in our country was demonstrated by Seber et al. (1993) were used. Statistical calculations were made with SPSS 22.0 statistical software by using frequency (f), percent (%) distributions and Chi-square techniques.

Although there are various sources related to the subject in the literature, the present study is important because it focuses on career planning of athletes and athlete students. In addition, it is also important to inform athlete students in athlete training centers about career and career planning options and to increase their awareness on these matters at an early age, at the discovery period, which is the first phase of gaining information about career planning.

Young people are the guarantee of our future. Every athlete in athlete training centers is a young person. To ensure that every Turkish citizen can engage in sports, young people are protected from all kinds of harmful habits and successful athletes are supported and protected are among the main duties of the state. Within the scope of these duties, to ensure that athlete students, who take formal education as well as sports training in athlete training centers as day or boarding student between the 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> grades or until the age of 18, are successful in both their formal education and sports training, is the responsibility of the Directorate of Sports Education, which implements all measures to educate these students as individuals, who provide the highest benefit to their country and nation in the future, and which carries out the tasks and operations of athletic training centers.

The following assumptions were made when conducting the study:

- The instructions for filling in the questionnaires that explain the aim of the study and how these aims will be attained were explained clearly and all respondents understood these instructions correctly,
- The athlete students who filled in the questionnaire form were not under any effect, they participated voluntarily to the study, they were impartial, and they answered the questions correctly,
- The information gathered from different sources available about the study were objective,
- The sample group of the study represents the universe.

In this context, in accordance with the general aim of the study, answers for the following questions about athlete students and athlete training centers were sought.

- 1- Do athlete students have hope for their future?
- 2- Do the sports training athlete students take in ATCs and their school education have any effects on each other?
- 3- Are guidance and counseling services provided to athlete students in athletic training centers adequate?
- 4- Do ATCs contribute positively to athlete students’ school education?
- 5- Have athlete students decided what to do in the future?

The study is limited to athlete students in athlete training centers affiliated with the provincial organizations of the General Directorate of Sports (36 athlete training centers in 33 provinces). The findings of the study are limited to the answers given by the athletes in the sample group to Career Planning Questionnaire and Beck Hopelessness Scale.

In this direction, the study consists of three sections. In the first section, a general framework is drawn on the basic concepts such as anxiety, concern for the future, hopelessness and career in order to emphasize the field of the study and the characteristics of this field.

The second section provides a general definition of the concept of sports and education as well as the details on the establishment, structure, management and legislation of athlete training centers and their distribution throughout the country.

The third section presents the model, universe, sample group, data collection techniques, information gathering processes, statistical methods used in data analysis and findings of the study.

The conclusion section includes discussions about future and career planning of athlete students as well as the effects of athlete training centers on these plans.

## **METHOD**

This section details the model, universe, sample group, data collection techniques, information gathering process, statistical methods used in data analysis and findings of the study.

### ***Model of the Study***

This study conducted in order to analyze concerns of athlete students in athlete training centers for the future and their career plans, is a descriptive study utilizing screening model.

Since the literature about the double career planning of athletes is limited, the present study is also descriptive in terms of revealing the views of athletes about their career planning and their evaluations about their plans for the future.

### ***Participants***

The universe of the research consists of 668 athlete students, who continue their sports training as day/boarding student in 36 athlete training centers affiliated with 33 Provincial Directorates of Youth Services and Sports under coordination of the Department of Sports Education, which is one of the main service units of the General Directorate of Sports. The sample group of the study was selected by using simple random sampling method from the universe because of the applicability of Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS), the validity and reliability study of which in our country was conducted by Seber

et al. (1993). All 668 high school students were tried to reach but 345 students were reached for various reasons. 61 of the questionnaires were considered as invalid because of missing data and thus the study was conducted on 284 athlete students.

### ***Collection of the Study Data***

In the gathering of the questionnaires answered by high school students in athlete training centers, help was asked from the managers, coaches and other employees of the Provincial Directorates of Youth Services and Sports working in ATCs. As athlete students had day or boarding student status, they were given the opportunity to fill in the questionnaire when they were in ATCs.

In order to collect the data according to the aim of the study, "Personal Information Form" and "Career Planning Questionnaire" developed by the authors, and "Beck Hopelessness Scale", which was developed by Beck et al. and validity and reliability of which in our country was demonstrated by Seber et al. (1993) were used. Their details are presented in the annexes. The questionnaire consisted of 46 questions.

### ***Personal Information Form***

It is a form including 11 questions prepared by the authors to determine sociodemographic characteristics of the student group such as gender, number of siblings, school type, sports branch, family income level, hobbies and parent education status.

Before the preparation of the form, the literature was reviewed, questionnaire questions in similar studies were examined and the necessary questions were added to the questionnaire.

### ***Career Planning Questionnaire Form***

It is a form including 15 questions prepared by the authors to measure career planning of athlete students for the future and the effects of athlete training centers on these career plans.

After the interviews with academicians and experts, a questionnaire including 23 questions was prepared by the authors. To test the questionnaire form, a pilot study was

conducted with the participation of 66 people. In line with the data obtained from the pilot study, the number of questions were reduced to 15 by making necessary corrections in the questionnaire form, and the opinions of academicians and experts were asked once more to determine sufficiency and efficiency of the questionnaire. The final form of the questionnaire including 15 questions was determined by taking into consideration the suggestions and views received.

#### *Beck Hopelessness Scale*

Beck Hopelessness Scale developed by Beck et al. is a scale that aims to determine the level of the pessimism of an individual for the future. When answering the BHS, the individual is asked to mark “yes” for the statements that are appropriate for him and “no” for the statements that are not appropriate for him. These statements have 11

correct and 9 false answer keys. (Saraç, 2015: 19).

#### *Analysis of Data*

In this section where the data obtained within the scope of the study are interpreted, the frequency and percentage tables of the demographic characteristics of the athletes participating in the study are presented. The percentage and frequency distributions that describe hopelessness statuses of the sample group are given. The data obtained were analyzed with SPSS Windows 22.0 statistical software, frequency and percentage distributions were used in data analysis, and Chi-square test was applied to find the relationships between some questions, and 0.05 significance level was accepted.

## FINDINGS

Table 1- Whether the athlete students in the study look at the future with hope and enthusiasm

		I look at the future with hope and enthusiasm		Total
		Yes	No	
Gender	Female	f	45	58
		%	77.6	100.0
	Male	f	166	226
		%	73.5	100.0
Total	f	211	284	
	%	74.3	100.0	

When the answers to the statement “I look at the future with hope and enthusiasm” are examined, it seen that 77.6% of the female

athlete students and 73.5% of the male athlete students answered “yes”.



Table 2- The correlation between looking at the future with hope and enthusiasm and genders of the athlete students in the study.

I look at the future with hope and enthusiasm	Gender						X <sup>2</sup> P value
	Female		Male		Total		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Yes	45	15.8	166	58.5	211	74.3	<b>0.520</b>
No	13	4.6	60	21.1	73	25.7	
<b>Total</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>20.4</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>79.6</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>100</b>	

According to the results of the table, there was no significant difference between genders of the athlete students and the question of

looking at the future with hope and enthusiasm in the X<sup>2</sup> test (p>0.05).

Table 3- The correlation between average monthly family income of the athlete students in the study and the influence of their families on their career goals and career choices

Monthly average income level of your family	My family guides me on my career goals and career choices.												X <sup>2</sup> P value
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree		Total		
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
<b>0-1500</b>	13	4.6	12	4.2	25	8.8	17	6.0	16	5.6	83	29.2	<b>0.014</b>
<b>1501-2500</b>	8	2.8	7	2.5	56	19.7	27	9.5	13	4.6	111	39.1	
<b>2501-3500</b>	4	1.4	3	1.1	32	11.3	18	6.3	9	3.2	66	23.2	
<b>3501-4500</b>	1	0.4	0	0	3	1.1	2	0.7	7	2.5	13	4.6	
<b>4501-6000</b>	1	0.4	0	0	2	0.7	3	1.1	2	0.7	8	2.8	
<b>6001 and above</b>	0	0	0	0	2	0.7	1	0.4	0	0	3	1.1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7.7</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>42.3</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>284</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

According to the results of the table, there was no significant difference between the average monthly family income levels of the athlete

students and being guided by the family on career goals and career choices in the X<sup>2</sup> test (p>0.05).

## DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This study was conducted in order to determine concern and hopelessness levels of athlete students, who attend to athlete training centers and high schools, for the future, and to reveal their ideas about career planning, and to make suggestions regarding these issues.

From the statements asked to determine positive/negative expectations of athlete students for the future, it is seen that 74.3% of them look at the future with hope and enthusiasm, 87% of them expect a good future and 82% of them believe that they will be successful in the future. In addition, 26.1% of athlete students see their future uncertain and 34.2% of them think that it is impossible for them to reach a real satisfaction in the future. When the table indicating the positive/negative expectations of athlete students for the future is examined, it is clear that more than half of athlete students are hopeful for the future.

When the answers given to the career planning questionnaire asked to the respondents in order to reveal the status and relationship of athlete training centers to career planning of athlete students are examined, it is seen that 47.9% of the respondents state that being an active athlete in ATCs contributes to their school education and 21.4% of them state that it does not have any contribution. Similarly, it is seen that the study hours in ATCs contribute to the achievement at school (57.4%). Considering the results obtained, it can be accepted that ATCs contribute to education and school achievement of students.

It was observed that 59.5% of the respondents do not agree or remain undecided to the statement about whether their families guide them on their career goals and career choices. The percentage of those who believe that the guidance and counseling services provided in ATCs are guiding them in future and career planning is 41.2% and the percentage of those who do not believe this is 38.8%. Family is the place where the most basic personality traits of the individual are shaped and the sense of basic trust which will continue throughout life is gained. However, it can be

said that athlete students also see ATCs as a guide for their career planning and future.

In the study, the respondents were asked about whether they knew what to do after they leave ATCs. According to the answers given to this statement, almost half of the respondents (47.9%) are unsure about what to do after leaving ATC and 29.2% of them do not know what to do at all. It is considered that such a result is caused by the lack of interviews with athlete students about their future or the inadequacy in quality and/or quantity of the guidance and counseling services on future and career planning provided in ATCs.

When the distribution of sports branches of athlete students by their gender is examined, it is observed that the number of male athletes is more than the number of female athletes in all branches. Based on the consultations to be made with sports federations and involved institutions and individuals regarding the selection of athletes to ATCs and the determination of their numbers, new regulations may be made for increasing the number of female athletes in various branches according to the needs and means.

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are made:

To ensure that athlete students in athlete training centers are successful at the highest degree in their academic and sports careers, they can adapt to the processes of transition from ATC and high school to university, and from university to professional life, and they acquire suitable professions after they leave ATCs, "Career Development Application and Research Centers" available in universities may be established in the organization structure of the General Directorate of Sports. These centers do not need to limit their services only with athlete students, and may extend their services to athlete students in the Turkish Olympic Preparation Centers or all athletes regardless of whether they are student or not.

Since the study hours offered in ATCs contribute to formal education of athlete students, the duration and variety of such study hours can be increased.

New ATCs can be established according to the requirements of different sports branches by taking into account the needs and economic means as well as the geographical characteristics of our country.

When sports branches are examined, it is seen that almost half of athlete students are in the wrestling branch. Increasing the number of students allocated for other branches and adding new sports branches within the scope of means may increase the success.

By taking into consideration the distribution of sports high schools affiliated with the Ministry of National Education, and the needs and means, new ATCs can be established in the provinces where there are sports high schools.

Recommendations for researchers;

This study, which was conducted to investigate concerns of athlete students in athlete training centers for the future and to reveal their views about career planning can be repeated for the athletes in the Turkish Olympic Preparation Centers.

Also, similar studies can be conducted for the national athletes who are in older age groups, and are not in the Turkish Olympic Preparation Centers.

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